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PAUL'S ESTIMATE
OF THE
PASTORAL OFFICE.

A Sermon

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF

REV. SPENCER L. FINNEY,

AS PASTOR OF THE SECOND REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

BY

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NEW YORK.

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NEW YORK:  
G. & H. MILLER, 645 BROADWAY.  
1852.

TO THE  
REV. ANDREW W. BLACK, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALLEGHENY, PA.,

WHO IS DISCHARGING THE

“OFFICE OF A BISHOP,”

TO

THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH

AND

THE EVERLASTING BENEFIT OF THE SPIRITS IN PRISON,

IN MEMORY OF

A LONG, PROFITABLE, AND UNSUSPECTING FRIENDSHIP,

*This Discourse*

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

## DISCOURSE.

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“If a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work.”

1 TIMOTHY iii. 1.

PERHAPS there never was a man on earth who was more competent to pronounce an enlightened judgment on the pastoral office than Saul of Tarsus, subsequently Paul the Apostle. Converted to God in the prime of life and vigor of his powers, he gave himself at once to the study and elucidation of the Christian system—the great subject about which the ministerial office is conversant. There were three elements in the character of Paul which qualified him, specially, for understanding and appreciating the sacred office. They were great natural talents, extraordinary spiritual gifts, and eminent personal piety. Paul had an intellect, whose capacious grasp took hold of the great truths of Christianity, in their largest measure and most extended connexions. His judgment was sound, discriminating, and almost intuitive. He had a heart full of benevolent affection, and an iron will which no personal sacrifices could daunt, and no opposition could deter from its purpose. These natural talents, too, were balanced and disciplined by all the available learning of the day. He had studied the Hebrew language and literature at the feet of Gamaliel; and at the schools of Tarsus had drunk deeply from the fountains of Grecian and Roman learning. This he laid upon the altar

of Christianity at his conversion, and brought it all with him, when he entered the sacred office. Of the peculiar gifts of inspiration which Paul possessed we need not speak in this connexion. They were those of his age. He spoke with tongues, discerned spirits, healed diseases, raised the dead, and wielded in other forms the power of miracle, to authenticate his own apostleship, and prove the divine original of the religion at whose altar he was serving.

The Apostle, too, was as distinguished for his personal piety as he was for his natural talents, and supernatural endowments. He knew the very hour of his conversion to God. On this subject he never had any hesitancy. And yet he was humble, dependent, prayerful, and unassuming. As a private Christian he was often under pungent conviction of sin, often in deep affliction, often in straits as to present duty, and often deeply mortified by his comparatively low attainments in the life of faith. And yet Paul walked with God. He had the largest share of the Spirit of adoption, enjoyed the most intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ, and was sometimes so enraptured with the sight of the invisible, as to be unable to tell whether he was in or out of the mortal body. The selfish principle seems to have been eradicated from his constitution, when divine grace took hold upon him on the road to Damascus. And in all his subsequent history his office, not his person, his master, not himself, were the main objects in his eye, and as far as he could effect it in the eye of others. We are in danger of losing sight of the eminence of Paul's personal piety, amidst the dazzling splendors of his public career. And yet it was here after all that his great strength was found. His mighty talents, while unsanctified, were a curse. Consecrated to God in the Gospel of his Son, they formed an instrumentality which was honored of God in bringing to Jesus Christ a larger number of redeemed sinners than, perhaps, have been

brought to salvation by that of any other man. *Superior natural talents, cultivated by adequate learning, and imbued, purified, and commanded by a large measure of the grace of God, form the main element of ministerial character.* This was the basis on which Paul erected that glorious superstructure of public usefulness in the Christian ministry, on whose fair proportions we still gaze with admiration and joy. He is the chief model of ministerial excellence presented to us in the word of God. And the outline of his character, which has just been sketched imperfectly, shows his competency to pronounce an enlightened opinion on the sacred office. This he does in the text—"If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

Two things are here—*The office of a Bishop*; and *Paul's estimate of its worth.* It is a "thing to be desired—a good work." We combine these topics, and present

#### PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

The Christian Episcopate is a spiritual office established by God, and maintained in the world for high moral purposes. In speaking of this office as *spiritual* we mean to express the three following, among other ideas. That it is an office belonging to the church of God, which is a spiritual society; that spiritual men only should enter it; and that it is established and perpetuated by God the Holy Spirit.

1. *The office of a bishop originates in, and belongs to the church of Jesus Christ.* It is ecclesiastical not civil, religious not secular, a function of the kingdom of heaven, and not of the magistracy of earth.

The name Bishop, like that of Presbyter and Baptist, is transferred into our language, with some modification of letters and syllables, from the original Greek. It is derived from the verb *επισκοπεω*, which signifies to look upon, or over,



and thus in a moral sense, to oversee, inspect, take care of. From this comes *ἐπισκοπος*—Bishop—an overseer, inspector, and *ἐπισκοπή* an inspection, oversight, or as it is properly rendered in our text, “The office of a Bishop.” The radical thought expressed is the “care of souls” under Jesus Christ, himself the “*Bishop of Souls*.” “They watch for your souls,” says Paul, “as those who must give account.” The name Bishop, too, is synonymous and convertible with that of Presbyter, or as it is translated “Elder.” This is a title of office introduced from the Synagogue to the Christian Church; and both belong to the same office under different aspects. Presbyter expresses the authority, and Bishop the duty appertaining to the pastoral office. Men in subsequent times have indeed made distinctions between them, at variance with their original use; but the Presbyters of Paul’s day were Bishops, the Bishops were Presbyters, and all to whom belonged these and the other ministerial titles were of one order, under Jesus Christ. Peter, who was older in the apostolic college than Paul, claimed for himself no higher title than that of an Elder among Elders. And the ordination of Timothy was by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery—the assembly of teaching Elders. The 20th Chapter of the Acts informs us that when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, he came to Miletus, and sending to Ephesus, “called for the Elders (Presbyters) of the Church,” and when they were come to him, he gave them, in the close of their most affecting interview, the pregnant advices of the 28th and subsequent verses—“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (Bishops) to feed the Church of God.” Take heed, ye “Elders,” to feed the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made you “Bishops.” In the same style of exhortation too, the Apostle Peter speaks in the fifth Chapter of his first Catholic epistle where he

addresses generally the elders of his own and other ages—"The Elders which are among you I exhort who am also an Elder—feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof"—acting the Bishop over—"not by constraint but willingly." The Ephesian Elders, of whom there was a plurality, were Bishops, and so were the co-Presbyters of Peter, while the duty of both was to "feed the flock of God." Prelacy has elevated her Bishops above the Presbyters, and placed them in a higher order. And Popery has superadded her archbishops, and cardinals, and other lords over God's heritage, until she brings us to that embodiment and demonstration of her own utter anti-christianism—the Pope himself. But for all this there is no foundation in the letter of God's word, the institutes of Jesus Christ, or the authorized practice of the primitive ages of the Church. And, therefore, we are constrained to reject it as an innovation on the beautiful simplicity of the gospel order, and the manufacture of a corrupted age, and worldly sanctuary, from which spirituality was rapidly taking its flight to a purer home. Who then is the Bishop on whose office Paul pronounces the eulogy of our text? He is the *Christian pastor*—as to rule, an equal among equals; his main function to teach the truth—his great business to bring man to Jesus Christ for the salvation of the soul. Not the diocesan Bishop of the Prelacy, but the parochial Bishop of Presbytery, both name and thing to be found in the oracles of God.

We have said that it is a spiritual office *because it belongs to that spiritual society, the Church*; that holy corporation of which the Redeemer has himself said, "My Kingdom is not of this world."

The Church of God has always existed in the divine mind as a distinct object of thought. In her invisible character she is composed of the whole election of grace,

the redeemed of every age, the completed family of adoption, the mystical body of Jesus Christ in its integrity. The first assembling of this immortal company as a unit shall be seen on the right hand of the throne of Jesus Christ, amidst the solemnities of the Judgment day; and after this it will be found in the Father's house of heaven—a society in a state of perfection, sharing the celestial honors of the universal and immortal headship of God's incarnate Son. According to the purpose and arrangement of God this society has a visible manifestation on earth, in every generation of mankind. Existing in the world, though not of it, the Church has a visible organization, visible ordinances, a visible order, and as essential to her permanent being, a class of officers who will discharge their functions under the eyes of men. These officers are the Presbyter Bishops of whom Paul speaks, the appointed pastors of the Churches with their authorized helps in government, the “Elders that rule well;”—the ministry of reconciliation in the discharge of their proper functions of government, worship, and instruction. This ministry the scriptures describe as God's gift to the Church, the gift of each person of the adorable Trinity to men for their salvation. It is the gift of God in the person of the Father—“I will give you pastors after mine heart.” The gift of God the Son from the throne to which, after his resurrection, he ascended.—“He ascended up far above all heavens—and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.” The gift of the blessed Spirit—“The Holy Ghost has made you overseers.” From the same source from which came the “unspeakable gift” Christ himself, came also the gospel ministry, and that source is the love of God, electing, redeeming, attractive, complacential, and eternal. In selecting this ministry too (for the approved



ministry is a selection) God in his ordinary dispensations, is pleased to make his choice from among the "seed of the righteous." He takes his servants from among the sons of Zion, born within her pale, nurtured in her arms, consecrated by her prayers, and devoted to her service by the pious parents who were instrumental in giving them being—"I am thy servant; the son of thine handmaid" has often been urged as an available plea for help and blessing, at the throne of eternal mercy, by the minister of Christ, in the great exigencies of his public service. The Head of the Church may indeed manifest his sovereignty, in taking the son of the stranger, and, having first brought him to himself, in leading him to the Christian altar where he may serve him. This he has done with great benefit to his cause. But after all, the main dependence of the Church for a spiritual and efficient ministry, is the sanctified households of her own enlightened and prayerful members. Born into the world it may be within her pale; experiencing the new birth in her fellowship, encouraged by her existing ministry, educated under her eye, and invested with office in conformity with her order, the Church of God perpetuates her own ministry, and she has the same promise to guarantee the continuity of that ministry, as she has for the maintenance of her own visible being. Who then is that Bishop whose office Paul commends? He is an officer of the Church of God, the greatest and the best society on earth. A society whose connexions are in heaven, whose end is salvation, and which in excellence, in utility, in honor and in power, is infinitely superior to all merely human associations—But,

2. *Spiritual men only should accept of office in the church of God.* Unconverted men, if such be found there, are intruders in the sacred office. Of all the inconsistencies that sin has brought with it into the universe of God, there is none greater or more criminal than an unsanctified minister of the

gospel. We have a fine model of ministerial character in Paul. And he, we know, was converted to God before he was invested with the pastoral office. He is first brought into personal friendship with Jesus Christ as a sinner saved by grace, and then he is made an apostle, and sent forth to "beseech men, in Christ's stead, that they be reconciled to God." Personal piety is an essential element in the ministerial character approved of God. For this there can be no substitute. What are natural talents, or extensive learning, or an eloquent tongue, if not baptized by the Spirit of God in his gracious influences? They are but a veil of hypocrisy through whose thin disguises God's eye of fire already sees, and which it is almost certain the eye of man will one day penetrate and expose. An unsanctified ministry, often found, alas! among the churches of the nations, has chilled their devotion, banished truth, substituted for the spirituality which is life, a ruinous formalism, and degraded them at last into mere worldly sanctuaries. And still there are men, who, though they wear the garb of Christianity, are infidel at heart, so mean and mercenary as to seek the sacred office for a piece of bread; and who, to secure an imagined respectability of station in society, obtrude themselves into the pulpit, where they preach *themselves*, and not the Saviour of the world! We do not say that every entrant to the sacred ministry should have the same form and amount of evidence of his conversion that was enjoyed by Paul, before he accepts of office in the church of God. Nor do we say that the church should demand such evidence from those whom she brings into her public service. This would be to require miracle, and inspiration, to which no claim can now be laid. But we do say, that the church should know her men so far as they can be known by the use of all becoming tests of religious character, and be far more careful on this subject than she often is, before she receives them to minister at

her altars. And, in reference to the individual himself, we add, that no man should allow the robes of office in the church of God to be thrown around his shoulders, until he has duly studied the evidences of his own personal piety, and is, at least, enabled to entertain a strong and influential hope through grace, that he has already taken hold on eternal life for himself. God has, indeed, permitted unholy men to assume the office of a Bishop in his house, and he may have made use of them too, as he overrules all evil, to advance the good of his cause and people. But he permits this in his providence, as he suffers other evils. He approves not of it, and he will not fail to punish the daring impiety, in his own appropriate time. There was a Judas Iscariot in the college of the apostles. But let men take warning! He lived a conscious, trembling, miserable hypocrite; he died a suicide: and on his tomb that epitaph of fearful import has been written by divine authority—"Better for that man he had never been born."

We know that simple piety is not all, or even a very large part of ministerial character. For many a truly pious man is utterly unfit for public service; and if, peradventure, he has become a minister of Christ in name, both the church and himself will, ere long, discover that he has missed his way, and is out of place in the pastoral office. But still we urge that personal holiness, and that in large and undoubted measure, is indispensable to the functions of the spiritual office of which we speak. Such holiness as will, at least, resemble Paul's, and will be constantly urging its possessor "to press forward to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ." If there were more of the spirit of Jesus Christ in the ministry which bears his name, there would be more brotherly love, more religious communion, more peace of soul, and more influence on the world. Contention about trifles would then cease, the ecclesiastical



assembly would be more conducive to growth in grace, and high-toned Christian principle be the controlling power, rather than the petty expedencies of the hour. In all this the church in general, and the ministry in particular, needs speedy revival from the Restorer of Israel. The spiritual office of the ministry should be filled with spiritual men.

3. *The office of the ministry is established and sustained in the world by God the Holy Spirit.* In the 13th chapter of the Acts, we have an inspired narrative of the formal designation of Barnabas and Paul to the work of missionaries to the Pagan nations. Now, says the record, "there were in the Church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers;" as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;" and again, "So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." Here we have the Presbytery of Antioch in session, and no doubt engaged in solemn deliberation on the question, Who shall be sent to carry the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles, to whom the door of faith is now to be formally opened? While engaged in acts of devotion, the Holy Ghost expresses his will that Barnabas and Saul shall be the persons. He calls them to the work. He designates them to it by the usual instrumentality. He sends them forth to its discharge. The same blessed agent who made the presbyters of Ephesus overseers of the flock of God, appears here as directing those already in office to the special service to which it is his pleasure to call them. The Holy Spirit prepares men for the work of the ministry by bestowing upon them ministerial gifts. By ministerial gifts, we mean not simply personal piety in all or any of its various manifestations, but those special mental qualifications which fit the man for being an officer in the church of God, a public teacher in the school of Christ, an ambassador from the Mediatorial



throne to mankind, at enmity with God. Fitness for the ministry is a special gracious endowment. Among these ministerial gifts are *natural talents of a high order*. Such talent had Paul, and it formed the primary element in that influential public character which he possessed, and by which the church of God was so greatly benefited. No society on earth needs commanding talent so much in its officers and advocates, as does the church of God. She needs them to command the respect of the world; to convince the ablest gainsayers; to feed the large-minded Christians in her own fellowship with the strong meat that is required by strong men, and to devise and execute the plans and projects that are suited to the existing age, and calculated to give progress and triumph to the cause of the Redeemer which is committed to her hands. There are parts of divine revelation, and aspects and relations of truth, which the feeble-minded can no more appreciate than they could appreciate the higher branches of physical or moral science. Christianity needs intellect of the highest order to be employed in her service, as much as human learning or political government require them. There are undoubtedly smaller as well as larger vessels in the house of God, but the larger hold the most, and pour forth the most for the benefit of others. A feeble-minded ministry will soon render any church contemptible. The selection which the church should make for her ministry should be of the best minds in her fellowship. Let her pastors, and theological professors, and other men of wisdom and influence, take care of her interests here; and while they make the judicious selection of the raw material, let them see to it also that it is not unduly hurried in the manufacture. The pillar in God's visible temple should be dressed and polished, and in keeping with the rest of its sacred architecture. Another ministerial gift which the Holy Ghost bestows, is *adequate learning*. This

Paul had without miracle, and to others of the primitive bishops it was given by inspiration. And in this day, when knowledge of language, of science, of art, and of all things valuable, is so extensively diffused, and when so much of it is in the hands of the enemy, and used by him to oppose the truth of God, how needful is it that the Christian ministry should have it to consecrate to the great purposes of their mission! We might speak of *aptness to teach and rule*, of the *eloquence of the tongue*, and of the *sense of ministerial responsibility*, as all ministerial gifts from the blessed Spirit, but to mention them must suffice.

When Paul made use, in holy rapture, of the expression "I magnify mine office," he meant to indicate the high estimate he had of it, in view of the source from which it came, the relations it sustained to God, and man, and eternity, the ends it was designed to effect in the salvation of men, and the peculiar honor bestowed upon it by Jesus Christ himself. He had a due sense of character, and therefore he was always the pure, high-minded, self-possessed, dignified, and fearless ambassador of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit who bestows on men the "office of a Bishop," shows them also its dignity and glory, and directs them to a conduct which is consistent with its momentous importance. The Holy Ghost also *calls men to the sacred office, he inclines them to accept it, and he invests them with it* according to the appointed order. The order of the house of God is as really from Jesus Christ, as is the truth which he gives as the matter of public instruction; and no man, acting under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will either undervalue or violate that order. It is not by immediate inspiration upon his own mind, nor by miracle publicly performed, that the Holy Ghost designates the man to his office, but by the ordinary mode prescribed by Jesus Christ. He employs the authorities of his house to judge and determine the

qualification, and ultimately bestow the office of the Bishop upon the chosen object. "To ordain Elders in every Church" is a standing ordinance of the gospel, and such ordination is that of which Paul speaks to Timothy, "by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Thus the qualified servant of Jesus Christ receives the office which he discharges, and runs, not unsent, but with the broad commission of the Saviour of men, brought down from the mediatorial throne, and placed in his hand by the abiding Spirit. Nor does he leave the Christian Bishop to himself when his induction to office is completed. He is the ceaseless helper of his infirmities. He teaches him how to preach, and how to pray. He nerves his arm in the hour of his feebleness, and consoles him in the season of his multiplied trials. He makes him sure of his own personal salvation, when the night of disappointment and gloom hangs its curtains of darkness around his troubled spirit; and he makes him successful, though often he knows it not, in bringing the sinner to Jesus Christ, and conveying to the mourners in Zion the delightful sympathies of the Great High Priest of our profession. Long ago would Satan have driven the Christian ministry from the world, had not the arm of Immanuel's special providence sustained them, and the special grace of the Spirit of adoption been constantly poured forth for their encouragement and support. The Saviour's promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the world." And this promise is accomplished by the love and power of the third person of the adorable Trinity himself. This has maintained in the world a succession of faithful men from ages past, and will continue to sustain them until grace is consummated in glory, and the created ministry of time is absorbed and lost in the immortal ministry "of the true tabernacle, the upper Sanctuary which God has pitched, and not man." What an office then is here! belonging to that



spiritual community the Church of God ; held by spiritual men, established and maintained by the Spirit of God, conversant about man as a spiritual being, and designed in its ultimate results to prepare him for the spiritual world on high, what manner of persons ought they to be who hold it ! Surely there is no place for triflers here. And yet even here it is often true as elsewhere in sacred things, that

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

This office, we have said, is preserved in the world for high moral purposes. And among these we mention,

1st, *Instruction from the Word of God.* The Christian Bishop is, by divine institution, the public religious instructor of the world. And of this instruction the Bible—the whole Bible—is the text-book. The commission which Jesus Christ places in his hands when he introduces him to his great school of the visible church, as a teacher subject to himself, is “Go, teach the nations.” And this teaching is done in consistency with the commission, only when the blessed truths of Scripture are expounded and applied to men in all their circumstances and relations. The Scriptures are the word of God, and men or angels could no more have made them than they could have made the sun, or the ocean, or the rainbow, or themselves. God is somewhere defined by a heathen to be “the soul of the universe ;” and, undoubtedly, the idea presented is a perversion of the Divine Omnipresence. How true it is, confining the thought within its proper bounds, that God is the soul of the Bible. The Deity, in his simplicity, his holiness, his wisdom, his power, and his love, pervading its entire material, and coming in contact with the mind and heart of man in every truth which it applies and duty which it urges. As a saved sinner, in his private character, the minister of religion should regard the



Scripture as his "best created companion." But as an officer he sustains relations to it of a higher description, and of augmented responsibility. He is to search the Scriptures not only that he may find eternal life for himself, but, also, that he may show that life to others. Nay, that he may offer life to men, with the authority of a messenger of Jesus Christ. He is to study the Bible that he may demonstrate its divinity, that he may urge with effect its warnings, that he may apply its consolations, and that he may bring men to the Saviour, whom it is its great object to commend to the faith and acceptance of the world. What time and thought, what patience and prayer, nay, what delighting of the soul in God's own word, are needful to make the man of God able from the heart to speak to the hearts of others! The connexion of the ministry with the Bible is the connexion of the teacher with his text-book, of the ambassador with his instructions, of the servant with the message he conveys; nay more, of the steward with the treasure which is committed to his custody, and for which he is held responsible. If men perish under the eye of the Christian Bishop, untaught, unwarned, unurged to believe in Jesus Christ, to the salvation of the soul, a fearful responsibility rests upon him, and a fearful retribution is before him. His daily contact with holy Scripture should be purifying and transforming to his own soul, and give increasing earnestness, zeal, and spirituality to his efforts for the eternal welfare of others. The God of Grace evinced that he knew well the constitution and wants of fallen man, when he provided for him a class of public functionaries whose business it should be, with the voice, and amidst the exciting influences of the social assembly, to make known to him the truth that saves, and to command his attention to its claims upon him. Thus he is to *speak* the truth in love, to persuade men, to wield the power of the living speaker as he arouses the mind to action, and

touches its springs with a directness and force to which no other instrumentality is competent. The Christian Bishop is a *preacher* of the word. And this, after all, is his mightiest function. "For it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Can men be influenced for good by the pen or the press; by the operations of their own minds, abstracted from the social influences around them, or by any other agency, to so great a degree or with so great rapidity, as by the tongue of the living teacher, touched by the seraph with the coal of fire from the divine altar? How has the church been revived, society reformed, and revolutions in the moral world extending the Saviour's kingdom commenced and carried forward? Mainly by a preached gospel, and without it—never. They who have Paul's enlightened estimate of the Bishop's work will never undervalue the preaching of the living ministry. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." But,

2. Embracing all we shall at present say of the purposes of the ministry in one other statement, we add what is after all its main object, that God designs to secure by it *the edification of the church*. And this includes comprehensively, the conversion of sinners—and the comfort and sanctification of saints, perfected in their actual preparation for the future life of glory. "He gave some; Apostles—and pastors, and teachers, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the church." The conversion of the sinner is the work of God the Holy Spirit. He communicates the principle of spiritual life which finds its first expressions in the turning of the soul to holiness and God. But in doing this, he uses a created instrumentality. Other agencies he may and does employ, but his main agency is undoubtedly the living ministry. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the power of



God." What an honorable part of the "good work" of the bishop approved of God is here! He who came to seek and save the lost, sends his ministers to effect this object, as his representatives among men, and often are they successful in the recovery of souls. There are two classes of men at whose conversion the ministry should aim. The first is the youth of the Church; and the second, the ungodly in the world. Let the ministry take care of the baptized youth under their own eye. Let them warn them of their danger, instruct them in their duty, and labor with all fidelity to bring them to Jesus Christ. Shall their own sons and daughters, their domestics in their households, and the offspring whom they have themselves consecrated to Jesus Christ, be left to perish in sight of the altar of God? Shall this nursery for heaven, this main source of supply for the ministry itself, be left to other and incompetent hands? Shall these already folded lambs of the flock be left to be scattered by the enemy, and to wander to error, to profligacy, and to perdition, while the ministry is engrossed with other cares, and absorbed in attention to objects at a greater distance? Verily this should not be. Much of the material for the erection of the building of mercy is here, and the builders should take care to use it. And then too, the world of the ungodly is all open to the efforts of the servants of Jesus Christ. Let each one of them in his place endeavor with all solicitude and activity, to snatch some of them from destruction, as they are hurrying past him on the rapid stream of life. Of converts from among her own baptized sons and daughters, and from the world beyond her pale, the God of grace is wont "to add daily to the Church, of such as shall be saved." But the edification of the church includes also the comfort and advancement in religious progress of the saints of God. It is worthy of remark that a large part of the Bible is addressed to the

saints. To them it is the word of consolation, and the aliment of faith. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God," is a very important part of the ministerial commission. "To feed the flock of God" is the delightful employment of the appointed overseer; and the conviction that to some good degree he is so doing, is one of the main consolations of the faithful minister amidst the trials of his self-denying engagements. In this age of activity and progress, when all is excitement, and when rapid motion from place to place seems to be the great desire of men, many are apt to imagine that unless all is done in a hurry, there is nothing done at all. And thus the church is in danger of falling into the error that, unless she is gathering in converts in masses, she is effecting nothing for God, and that in number only there is power. Thus, too, she is often induced to have recourse to schemes of worldly policy, and to neglect the ordinances of God for the inventions of her own expediency.

This may fill her ranks with unconverted men, and her ministry with the inferior and mercenary who labor only for the present life, but it will be at the expense of her intelligence, her piety, her religious progress, and her real influence with the world for saving purposes. The piety that the Church requires is thoughtful, considerate, intelligent, and profound, as well as active and arousing. The Church is a school, and her pupils require time to progress in knowledge, and complete their education. She is a garden, and the oak whose growth is slow is there, as well as the lesser plant that is sooner brought to perfection. The celestial character is to be formed in the man of God before he is prepared for heaven, and to secure this should be one of the main ends of Zion's administrations. The Church of Jesus Christ is now unhappily divided, and yet, even in this her fragmentary state, there is more real unity than is found in



any other society under heaven. Upon the basis of this unity her various departments labor, and her blessed Head so overrules their existence as to give to each department its place, to work for his glory. He will not approve of error or disorder, but he will take hold of the saving truth, and uncorrupted ordinance which he finds existing in the midst and in spite of them, and make these the means of control and restraint to the world, and of salvation to his own election. All, he will employ, more or less directly in the salvation of man. To one department of his divided family he will give such direction as that it shall be useful in arousing the attention of men to the things that appertain to their salvation. Another he will use in contributing to the preservation of good morals in the world, by setting restraints upon the grosser vices. Another he will employ to encourage and promote sound learning devoted to sacred purposes, while he will honor another with the work of testifying for all revealed truth in its harmonies, exemplifying the order of his house, and urging upon men the duty of bringing their persons and their associations, their morals, their business, their politics, and everything human that sin has depraved and injured, under the influence and control of the gospel, and in subordination to Messiah's throne. There are better days before our world than it is enjoying now; days of liberty to the oppressed, of information to the ignorant, of great improvement in morals, and of universal peace and happiness to the great brotherhood of mankind. And the world shall have this character because holiness will be the controlling influence in society. To give this character to the world is the business of the visible Church of Jesus Christ. In this work her ministry shall have a most prominent place, and it shall be done, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Let it be remembered, however, that after all, the great end of the "good work" of

the Christian Bishop is to prepare man for heaven, as instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Here it is that religion is perfected. Here Christianity has its ultimate and glorious issue. The end of faith is the salvation of the soul, and that salvation involves the eternal life which is realized in its fulness only in the world to come. From its connexions with heaven and eternity the sacred office derives its dignity. There are its fruits, there its triumphs, and there, through grace, are its rewards—"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Of this subject I have no more special application to make than that which is involved in the previous statements. The charges to pastor and people are in other hands. I do, however, add to the congregation about to receive their pastor: Brethren in Jesus Christ, the object of your desire is now to be accomplished. This evening your organization is to be completed by the ordination and installation among you of the person of your unanimous choice. On him, and on you, I invoke the best blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The most of you have sustained a pastoral relation to myself, and with some of you, for years, I have taken sweet counsel in going to the house of God. I now transfer my pastoral responsibilities for you, to another, of whom it is my earnest prayer that God may give him to you as a pastor after his own heart, "to feed you with knowledge, and with understanding!"

Brethren in the ministry, remember that the office of a Bishop is a "*work*." No compliment merely, but a labor. No sinecure, but a service, honorable, useful, responsible. A service never done while life lasts; and yet surrounded by blessed helps, and encouraged by the highest rewards.

When Donald Cargill, that holy martyr of blessed memory, was about to ascend the scaffold, at the market-cross in Edinburgh, to die for the truth of Messiah's sole and universal headship over the church, and over all things, his impressive language was, "The Lord knows I go on this ladder with less fear and perturbation of mind, than ever I entered the pulpit to preach." If such views of the sacred office filled the mind of this honored servant of God, in circumstances of such awful interest, and if Paul himself was sometimes constrained to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things!" what manner of persons ought we to be who bear this same office, but with smaller measures of faith to sustain in the performance of its duties! Our hope is in the fact that "our sufficiency is of God."

